

Message Text

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SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER ON INDO-US RELATIONS

1. ACCORDING TO AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN THE HINDUSTAN TIMES FEBRUARY 8, PRIME MINISTER GANDHI RESPONDED AS FOLLOWS WHEN ASKED WHETHER SHE THOUGHT "A MORE MEANINGFUL EQUATION" WITH THE UNITED STATES "CAN EVOLVE IN THE NEAR FUTURE": QUOTE: I WOULD CERTAINLY LIKE TO EVOLVE A MORE MEANINGFUL EQUATION WITH THE UNITED STATES. BUT I DO NOT KNOW HOW TO DO IT. NOW THEY ARE VERY ANGRY. AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS HAVE BEEN CONSISTENTLY WRITING AGAINST INDIA. THEY SAY THEY HAVE A FREE PRESS. THEY SAY WE SHOULD NOT HAVE CURBS ON OUR PRESS. BUT IF PATRIOT WRITES SOMETHING AGAINST AMERICA THEY BLAME THE GOVERNMENT AND THEY ARE VERY ANGRY. AND THEY ARE OF COURSE, EXTREMELY POWERFUL AND THEY USE THEIR ANGER - AND IT IS SOMETHING THAT IMMEDIATELY INFLUENCES OTHERS AND AFFECTS OUR COUNTRY AT ONCE, OUR ECONOMICS AS WELL AS OTHER THINGS. UNQUOTE. THE JANUARY 31 INTERVIEW WAS CONDUCTED BY HINDUSTAN TIMES CHIEF EDITOR AND DEALT ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY WITH THE INDIAN DOMESTIC SCENE.

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2. ACCORDING TO A SAMARCHAR REPORT IN THE NATIONAL HERALD FEBRUARY 9, THE PRIME MINISTER COMMENTED AT LENGTH ON FOREIGN CRITICISM OF INDIA AT BHARATPUR ON FEBRUARY 8. THE PRIME MINISTER IS REPORTED TO HAVE "LASHED OUT AT THOSE COUNTRIES WHICH HAD CRITICIZED THE EMERGENCY" AND SPECIFICALLY CHARGED THAT THEY DID NOT WANT INDIA TO BECOME STRONG. THE NATIONAL HERALD FRONT-PAGE REPORT CONTINUES: QUOTE: SHE RECALLED THAT THOSE COUNTRIES WHICH HAD CRITICISED THE EMERGENCY WERE THE SAME WHICH HAD SIDED WITH THE ARMY DICTATORSHIP IN PAKISTAN AT THE TIME OF THE BANGLADESH CRISIS.

THEY NEVER HAD A WORD OF PRAISE FOR INDIA EVEN WHEN NO ONE IN THIS COUNTRY WAS IN JAIL AND WHEN THERE WERE NO RESTRICTIONS ON THE PRESS.

WHEN INDIA WAS FACING A TREMENDOUS BURDEN OF ONE CRORE REFUGEES FROM BANGLADESH THOSE COUNTRIES HAD NOT GIVEN ANY HELP BUT SIDED WITH PAKISTAN. THIS ONLY PROVED THAT THEY DID NOT LOVE DEMOCRACY.

THE PRIME MINISTER REFERRED TO THE CRITICISM OF THE ATOMIC EXPULSION BY INDIA AND SAID THAT THE NOISE OF CRITICISM WAS LOUDER THAN THE EXPULSION ITSELF. SIMILARLY WHEN JAWAHARLAL NEHRU HAD SET UP INDUSTRIES THESE COUNTRIES HAD QUESTIONED THE NEED FOR HEAVY INDUSTRIES IN THIS COUNTRY.

BUT WITHOUT SUCH INDUSTRIES AS WELL AS THE CAPACITY TO MEET THE COUNTRY'S DEFENCE REQUIREMENTS, INDIA WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO WIN THE 1971 WAR WHEN THE EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE HAD BEEN STOPPED. UNQUOTE.

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